STUDENT ACTIVITIES

#1 RESPECT AND COMMUNICATION

LEARNING OBJECTIVE : To develop your ability to communicate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients in a culturally sensitive manner

To complete the task you will need to speak to the Practice Manager and identify a patient you may speak with.

There are three sets of questions for you to answer.

Complete the “blue” questions before you speak with the community member

Complete the “yellow” questions with the community member

Complete the “ green” questions after you have spoken with the member

INTRODUCTION

**Cultural Respect**

Respect is very important in every social structure in all communities and is especially visible in Aboriginal communities. Respect for Elders, the land, animals and ancestors are fundamental aspects of Aboriginal culture.

A lack of cultural respect can act as an overwhelming barrier, as without cultural respect it is impossible to overcome any other barriers. Cultural respect can determine the way services present and conduct themselves and as a result can determine the effectiveness of a service.

When working with Aboriginal communities, it is important to display a certain level of respect and understanding of Aboriginal culture. This does not mean you have to know everything about Aboriginal languages, belief systems, and cultural practices.

Cultural respect is being aware that Aboriginal culture differs from non- Aboriginal culture and that this culture may impact on the way that health and illness is experienced.

**Communication and Language**

The use of appropriate communication demonstrates respects for the other party, and if applied effectively, it can put someone at ease in what may be an embarrassing situation.

Fear of the medical system and of being disempowered; mistrust; collective memories of the experience of colonisation and its aftermath; lack of understanding of Aboriginal customs, values, lifestyle and the importance of family and land; and experiences of racism have been identified as key issues impairing communication.

Medical terminology can act as a real challenge and as for many lay people information needs to be stated simply and clearly. It is important not to assume that somebody has understood what has been said simply because they have said “OK, that’s fine” or something similar. People are often too embarrassed to admit that they don’t understand something ie “shame”.

Using too much medical terminology also creates more of a power imbalance and helps to make people feel inadequate. Many Aboriginal people who walk into a service are very aware of the power imbalances. Due to Aboriginal history and the continued discrimination, Aboriginal people often feel unequal to service providers. This is particularly true if the service provider is non-Aboriginal.

Additionally, service providers need to be aware that within the Aboriginal population, there

are varying degrees of literacy and numeracy.

**QUESTIONS – Before you speak to your community member you are required to answer these questions to assist you to understand some of the challenges that may be present for some people**

When you approach an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patient, what do you need to be aware of ?

What is an Aboriginal Health Worker or Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officer and how could they assist you with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients.

How would you determine whether a patient understands what you are explaining.

What could you do to check whether a patient understands the reasons to take treatment eg medication, how to store and how and when to take the medication.

What would be some of consequences for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients who experience poor cultural respect and communication with health professionals

**QUESTIONS – To ask your community member**

Example Script…or use your own words

Hello,

*Thank you for talking to me today, I appreciate your time. My name is XXXXXXXX and I am a XXXXXXX student getting some practical experience and I am interested in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. I would like to ask you a few questions if that is OK.*

1. Can you please tell me a little about your culture.

2. Do you think your culture has made a difference to any of your health care experiences, or the experiences of people you know ?

3. What could have been done by yourself or health workers or services to improve the experience ?

**QUESTIONS – After you have spoken to your community member**

What did you learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture ?

Did you learn anything about culture that would influence how you work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people ?

For you personally, what are the four most important issues to consider when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients ?

Reading ( attached)

Barriers to participation of Aboriginal people in cancer care: communication in the hospital setting. MJA 2009 190: 574-579

Sharing the true stories: improving communication between Aboriginal patients and healthcare workers. MJA 2002, 176 466-470.

#2 Aboriginal Health and Closing the Gap

To complete the task you will need to speak to staff, refer to the Closing the Gap Indigenous Chronic Disease Package, research Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation and National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation websites, Better Health Channel, Australian Indigenous Health Info Net.

INTRODUCTION

* Indigenous community refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of our community.
* Our community refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who live with the Glenelg Shire (Portland, Heywood and surrounding townships) .
* Aboriginal people have higher rates of poor health than non-Aboriginal people.
* Indigenous people are nearly twice as likely to be admitted to hospital as non-Indigenous people.
* Aboriginal people have much higher rates of infection for many contagious and potentially life threatening diseases.
* Traditional diets were rich in nutrients and low in fat.
* Modern urban diets tend to be high in fat and sugar but low in nutrition.
* High fat, low fibre diets have been linked to a number of disorders including obesity, cardiovascular disease and diabetes.
* The infant death mortality rate among Indigenous people is three times higher than the national average, or 1.5 deaths per 1000 births compared to five per 1,000
* Physical ,social and quality of life issues impact on Indigenous health

CAN YOU PLEASE PREPARE AN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1. What is the definition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and how does if differ from a “mainstream” definition of health ?

2. What is an Aboriginal and Torrest Strait Islander Health Check ?

3. What is an ATSI Health Check ?

4. What are the benefits of the Indigenous community undertaking an annual ATSI Health Check ?

5. What internal ( DWECH ) referral pathways would you use for an At Risk of Chronic Disease Indigenous community member (list staff & program) ?

6. What is the role of the DWECH Chronic Disease Co-ordinator ?

7. What are physical issues that impact on Indigenous health ?

8. What are 3 major health concerns for Indigenous children ?

9. What are social issues that impact on Indigenous health ?

In 2008 the Australian Government committed $1.6 billion towards the Closing the Gap for Indigenous Health**.**

10. What is Closing the Gap ?

11. What is the aim of Closing the Gap ?

“ The Stolen Generations” describes the forced removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families was official government policy from 1909 to 1969.

12. What is your understanding of the Stolen Generation?

13. What is Sorry Day and when is it celebrated?

**Please forward your response to the DWECH Student Liaison Officer, Janice Huggers ( Practice Manager, DWECH) on** [**pm@dwech.com.au**](mailto:pm@dwech.com.au) **before your last day of placement** **INTRODUCTION**

#3 Quality Use of Medicines

The QUMAX Program is a quality use of medicines (QUM) support initiative that aims to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The focus of the Program is to improve the quality use of medicines through a range of support services provided by participating Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) and community pharmacies in rural and urban Australia.

PART A

Please answer the following questions

1. How does an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander access the QUMAX program.

2. What does a pharmacy need to do to arrange for this program to be available

3. Explain why the QUMAX program has been introduced

4. What are the benefits to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community

5. What are the benefits to the pharmacy when participating in the QUMAX program

6. What are the challenges a pharmacy may experience when providing the QUMAX program and how could these be managed or avoided.

7. What are the systems in place to ensure the QUMAX program is of high quality and what are the responsibilities of the pharmacy.

PART B

The DWECH Chronic Disease Co-ordinator ( Shirley ) is organising home visits for medication reviews. Please contact the DWECH Practice Manager ( Janice) to see if a home review has been scheduled that you may attend during your placement time at DWECH.

#4 Best Practice in Self Identification

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: To explore best practice in self-identification and the importance of health professional awareness of this

INTRODUCTION

Aboriginal Victorians experience poorer health and lower life expectancy than the general community. A number of complex barriers restrict Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ access to health services. For many Aboriginal people, hospitals are places to fear. They may have experienced racism and cultural insensitivity in the past, and some may not have the necessary knowledge and confidence about the health care they will receive.

All health services and pharmacies need to ask all patients for every episode of care whether they are of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare have developed resources to assist services to understand why it is important to ask people of their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and describe “ Best Practice” in how to ask the question.

Access these resources from the internet and answer the following questions

1. Why is it important for the government to ensure health services to ask the Self-Identification question?

2. Why is it important for health services and staff to ask the Self-Identification question?

3. How could the experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people be improved by answering the question ?

4. How would you explain to patients the reasons for collecting this information and what challenges could you experience ?

5. Is it discriminatory to ask the Self-Identification question?

6. What are some reasons why health services staff would not ask the Self- Identification question?

7. Why is emphasis placed on health services asking this question for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and not for other cultures?

8. What special emphasis is needed for mothers and babies?